

Mennonite Historian



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Between Hague and Peace River, 1934. (Courtesy Glenbow Archives, Calgary, Alberta)

Mennonites and the Depression

by Ellen Unger, CMBC student

When you look at a picture long and often enough, you get to feeling some ownership of it, some merging of identity with what you see. That is especially true with a picture of a family.

I look at the children and try to guess which one I would be if it were my family. Then I look at the parents and imagine how young they would have had to be when they were married, in order to rear seven children.

And then I look even closer - at the bare feet, the furrowed lines on the father's forehead, the unsmiling faces, and then lastly, at the date of the photograph - 1934! In some curious way, the photograph of a family so vulnerable during the Depression years

seems like an invasion of their privacy, their integrity.

This particular picture resurfaces in a number of books and articles, and always it is used as a symbol of the Depression Era: James H. Gray, *The Winter Years* (1966); D.G. Kerr and R.I. Davidson, *An Illustrated History of Canada* (1966); Cornell, Hamelin, et al, *Canada: Unity in Diversity* (1967); Barry Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years* (1973); *Saturday Citizen*, 8 March 1976; F.H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1920-1940* (1982); *Winnipeg Free Press*, 10 January 1985. In each place the same story is told with different names, faces, and situations, and in each, the picture serves as a memoir, a legacy

to the ordinary people caught in the tragic events of the thirties. It is a guarantee that the Depression and its subsequent repercussions will not vanish without a trace.

Why is this specific picture used so often, and how did it come to be circulated so widely? In most of the articles, the family is not identified. But in the 1976 issue of the *Saturday Citizen* we read that they are the Abram and Elizabeth Fehr family, returning to Hague, Saskatchewan from a winter spent 100 miles north of Peace River, Alberta. There they had searched and hoped in vain for security in farmland and farm life. The picture was taken in Edmonton in 1934. It was printed in a few newspapers then, not telling other survivors anything they did not already know.

Now it has become a symbol serving as concrete evidence that when the Depression hit, the family was caught right in the middle. Ironically, it was the children who survived the Depression best of all. But survival does not presuppose a life free of scars and painful reminders. Maybe that is why this picture is so popular. It best characterizes an era that still affects everyday life in our country today.

I am not a child of the Depression; perhaps I am a grandchild of the Depression, one generation removed from the constant grind of poverty, hopelessness and fear. Barry Broadfoot, in the *Ten Lost Years*, refers to this generation gap as the only one that counts. It is between those who remember the Depression and those who do not. I can only experience the Depression of the 1930s through the eyes, hearts and memories of those who were there.

The Fehr family was there — and because of one photograph that was taken over fifty years ago, and is still being published today, we can identify at various levels with the events of the "dirty thirties".

Editorial Note: Mennonite Heritage Centre invites readers to send in Depression photographs in their possession for our collection. Please provide information about each photo in as much detail as possible. Photos will be returned after a copy has been made for the MHC files.

Congregational Histories

This list of published and unpublished histories of congregations of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada has been prepared for the workshop, "Congregational and Community Histories" which will take place at the annual conference sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, July 4-9, 1985, in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Published Histories of The Congregations of The Conference of Mennonites in Canada

Many church congregations celebrate their anniversaries, be they 10th or 75th, by compiling a history of their church, usually with photos of early church members, first meeting houses, lists of members baptized, and so on. The Mennonite Historical Library at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College has quite a number of these published congregational histories. These are listed below. Please let us know of congregational histories that are not on this list; we would like to add them to the library.

The histories are arranged here according to province and then alphabetically by the name of the church as found in the 1985 *Yearbook* of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

British Columbia

Bethel Mennonite Church, 1936-1980; Aldergrove, B.C. Altona, MB: D.W. Friesen, 1980. 103p.

Eben-Ezer Mennonite Gemeinde; Abbotsford, B.C. Abbotsford, B.C.: Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, 1978. 80p.

A History of the First Mennonite Church, Greendale, B.C. Greendale, B.C.: First Mennonite Church, 1976. 93p.

Alberta

Celebrating 25 Years: A History of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta. Edmonton: First Mennonite Church, 1984. 104p.

Adrian David, ed. *Marvelous are thy ways: A Brief History of the Rosemary Mennonite Church.* Rosemary, AB: Rosemary Mennonite Church, 1961. 14p.

Mennonite Church, Rosemary: Formerly Westheimer Mennoniten Gemeinde. Rosemary, AB: Rosemary Mennonite Church, 1980. 113p.

Saskatchewan

Through 50 years at Bethany Mennonite Church, 1932-1982. Watrous, SK: Anniversary Committee, 1982. 88p.

Klaassen, H.T. *Birth and Growth of the Eigenheim Mennonite Church, 1892-1974.* Rosthern, SK: Eigenheim Mennonite Church, 1974. 85p.

Dyck, John H. and Alvin P. Schellenberg, eds. *First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask.* Saskatoon, SK: First Mennonite Church, 1973. 74p.

Patkau, Esther. *First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, 1923-1982.* Saskatoon, SK: First Mennonite Church, 1982. 319p.

Rempel, John D. *History of the Hague Mennonite Church, Hague, Saskatchewan, 1900-1975.* Rosthern, SK: Hague Mennonite Church, 1975. 94p.

Patkau, Esther, ed. *Nordheimer Mennonite Church of Saskatchewan, 1925-1975.* Hanley, SK: Nordheimer Mennonite Church, 1975. 140p.

Boldt, Leonard. *Fortieth Anniversary: Osler Mennonite Church.* Osler, SK: Osler Mennonite Church, 1968. 16p.

Rempel, J.G. *Die Rosenorter Gemeinde in Saskatchewan.* Rosthern, SK: Rosenorter Gemeinde, 1950. 183p.

Regier, Sylvia. *Three score and ten with God in Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church, 1910-1980, reaching to its roots 1893.* Tiefengrund, SK: Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church, 1980. 247p.

Derksen, Lynda, et. al. *Our Heritage, Our Treasure: Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham, Saskatchewan, 1910-1985.* Langham, SK: Zoar Mennonite Church, n.d. [1985]. 108p.

Manitoba

Gerbrandt, H.J. *Adventure in Faith.* [History of the Berghaler Mennonite Church in Manitoba.] Altona: Berghaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba, 1970. 379p.

Zacharias, Peter D. *Footprints of a Pilgrim People: Story of the Blumenort Mennonite Church.* Gretna, MB: Blumenort Mennonite Church, 1985. 291p.

Elim Gemeinde: Grunthal, Manitoba, 1927-1972. Grunthal, MB: Elim Gemeinde, n.d. 140p.

Klassen, John D. *The 45 year History of the Grunthal Berghaler Mennonite Church, 1936-1981.* [CMC Related.] Altona: D.W. Friesen, 1981. 198p.

Stoesz, Dennis. *The Story of the Home Street Mennonite Church: 1957-1982.* Winnipeg: Home Street Mennonite Church, 1985. 111p.

Siemens, Jacob. *Chronik der Schoenfelder Gemeinde von 1925 bis 1968.* Pigeon Lake, MB: Schoenfelder Gemeinde, 1968. 28p.

Klassen, Isaac. *Dem Herrn die Ehre: Schoenwieser Mennoniten Gemeinde von Manitoba, 1924-1968.* (Now First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, MB.) Altona: D.W. Friesen, 1969. 150p.

Dueck, Peter G. & John Braun, eds. *Lowe Farm Berghaler Mennonite Church, Lowe Farm, Manitoba: Seventy-fifth anniversary, 1905-1980.* Lowe Farm, MB: Anniversary Book Committee, 1980. 47p.

Milestones and Memories, 1931-1981: Berghaler Mennonite Church of

Morden. Morden, MB: Morden Berghaler Mennonite Church, 1981. 192p.

North Kildonan Mennonitengemeinde, 1935-1975. Winnipeg, MB: North Kildonan Mennonitengemeinde, 1975. 96p.

25 Jahre Sargent Avenue Mennonitengemeinde, 1950-1975. Winnipeg, MB: Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, 1975. 74p.

Gemeindebuch Komitee. *Springfield Heights Mennoniten Gemeinde, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1971.* Winnipeg, MB: Springfield Heights Mennoniten Gemeinde, 1971. 52p.

Dyck, J.P. *Das 25-jaehrige Jubilaeum der Springsteiner Mennonitengemeinde, 1936-63.* Springstein, MB: Springstein Mennonite Church, 1963. 60p.

Froese, Franz J., ed. *25 jaehriges Jubilaeum der Steinbach Mennoniten Gemeinde, 1968.* Steinbach, MB: Steinbach Mennonite Church, 1968. 141p.

Neufeld, G.G. *Die Geschichte der Whitewater Mennoniten Gemeinde in Manitoba, Canada, 1925-1965.* Altona: D.W. Friesen, 1967. 242p.

Reflections: the First 50 years. Wingham Mennonite Church, 1933-1983. Elm Creek, MB: Wingham Mennonite Church, 1983. 92p.

Ontario

Cornies, John H., ed. *Celebrate 1952-1977: The Hamilton Mennonite Church.* Hamilton, ON: Hamilton Mennonite Church, 1977. 54p.

Driedger, N.N. *The Leamington United Mennonite Church: Establishment and Development 1925-1972.* No publ., 1972. 176p.

Leamington United Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ontario. Altona: Friesen Printers, 1978. 104p.

Niagara United Mennonite Church: 25th Anniversary, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 1938-1963. Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON: Niagara United Mennonite Church, 1963. 46p.

25 Jahre Vineland Vereinigte Mennonitengemeinde 1926-1961. Virgil, ON: Vineland Vereinigte Mennonitengemeinde, 1961. 58p.

Fast, Jacob & Herbert Enns, eds. *Jubilee issue of the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, 1924-1974.* Waterloo, ON: Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, 1974. 136p.

Unpublished Congregational Histories

These unpublished papers deal with the history of various congregations of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. The papers are located in the Vertical File of the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Most of them

are student papers done at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College from 1951-1985.

British Columbia

Bethel (Aldergrove, 1958, 8p.)
 Bethel (Aldergrove, 1983, 32p.)
 Cedar Valley (formerly United Mennonite) (Mission, 1956, 17p.)
 Chilliwack (Chilliwack, 1972, 28p.)
 Chilliwack (Chilliwack, 1977, 33p.)
 Church of the Way (Granisle, 1982, 12p.)
 Eben-Ezer (Clearbrook, 1978, 36p.)
 First (Burns Lake, 1955, 9p.)
 First (Burns Lake, 1960, 2p.)
 First (Burns Lake, 1980, 13p.)
 First United (Vancouver, 1976, 12p.)
 Flatrock (Fort St. John) (Cecil Lake, 1960, 1p.)
 Mountainview (Vancouver, 1955, 9p.)
 Peace (Richmond, 1982, 35p.)
 Sherbrooke (Vancouver, 1980, 29p.)
 Yarrow United (Yarrow, 1951, 28p.)

Alberta

Bergthal (Didsbury, 1974, 14p.)
 Bergthal (Didsbury, 1978, 14p.)
 Bergthal (Didsbury, 1978, 18p.)
 Calgary Fellowship (Calgary, 1983)
 Coaldale (Coaldale, 1978, 27p.)
 First (Edmonton, 1978, 13p.)
 Foothills (Calgary, 1965, 9p.)
 Foothills (Calgary, 1980, 20p.)
 Foothills (Calgary, 1982, 40p.)
 Hillcrest (Grande Prairie, 1960, 2p.)
 Springridge (Pincher Creek, 1978, 29p.)
 Taber (Taber, 1960, 2p.)
 Tofield (Tofield, 1965, 27p.)

Saskatchewan

Bethany (Lost River, 1960, 3p.)
 Bethany (Lost River, 1965, 29p.)
 Bethel (Park Valley, 1960, 2p.)
 Capasin (Capasin, 1977, 16p.; extinct)
 Ebenfeld (Herschel, 1965, 8p.)
 Emmanuel (Pierceland, 1960, 1p.)
 Emmaus (Wymark, 1961, 26p.)
 Emmaus (Wymark, 1972, 23p.)
 Eyebrow (Eyebrow, 1952, 16p.)
 First (Saskatoon, 1958, 9p.)
 Fiske (Fiske, 1979, 53p.)
 Grace (Regina, 1977, 11p.)
 Grace Mission (Meadow Lake, 1960, 2p.)
 Grace Mission (Meadow Lake, 1977, 37p.)
 Hague (Hague, 1973, 29.)
 Hoffnungsfelder (Glenbush, 1978, 2p.)
 Hoffnungsfelder (Rabbit Lake, 1978, 16p.)
 Immanuel (Beaverdale, 1960, 2p.)
 Mount Royal (Saskatoon, 1985, 14p.)
 Neuanlage Grace (Hague, 1973, 29p.)
 North Battleford (North Battleford, 1960, 2p.)
 North Battleford (North Battleford, 1973, 31p.)
 North Battleford (North Battleford, 1985, 26p.)
 Nutana Park (Saskatoon, 1982, 16p.)
 Osler (Osler, 1975, 10p.)
 Tiefengrund Rosenort (Laird, 1959, 26p.)
 Tiefengrund Rosenort (Laird, 1977, 35p.)
 Wildwood (Saskatoon, 1985, 20p.)

Wildwood (Saskatoon, 1985, 27p.)
 Zoar (Waldheim, 1973, 71p.)
 Zoar (Waldheim, 1982, 19p.)

Manitoba

Altona Bergthaler (Altona, 1979, 12p.)
 Arnaud (Arnaud, 1982, 31p.)
 Arnaud (Arnaud, 1985, 16p.)
 Bethel (Winnipeg, 1950, 22p.)
 Bethel (Winnipeg, 1965, 16p.)
 Bethel (Winnipeg, 1965, 26p.)
 Blumenort (Rosetown, 1962, 26p.)
 Carman (Carman, 1985, 29p.)
 Charleswood (Winnipeg, 1982, 26p.)
 Crystal City (Crystal City, 1977, 20p.)
 Crystal City (Crystal City, 1985, 19p.)
 Crystal City (Crystal City, 1985, 27p.)
 Douglas (Winnipeg, 1983, 30p.)
 Elim (Grunthal, 1980, 20p.)
 First (Winnipeg, 1979, 20p.)
 Fort Garry (Winnipeg, 1977, 25p.)
 Grace (Brandon, 1960, 3p.)
 Halbstadt (Halbstadt, 1965, 23p.)
 Herold (Morden, 1976, 28p.; extinct)
 Home Street (Winnipeg, 1958, 8p.)
 Home Street (Winnipeg, 1966, 16p.)
 Home Street (Winnipeg, 1973, 29p.)
 Lichtenau (Morris, 1980, 9p.)
 MacGregor Bergthaler (MacGregor, 1955, 19p.)
 Mather (Mather, 1977, 7p.)
 Morden Bergthaler (Morden, 1966, 44p.)
 Niverville (Niverville, 1965, 17p.)
 Niverville (Niverville, 1978, 18p.)
 Nordheim (Winnipegosis, 1978, 20p.)
 Northdale (Winnipeg, 1985, 15p.)
 Oak Lake (Oak Lake, 1967, 18p.)
 Portage (Portage la Prairie, 1982, 11p.)
 Sargent Avenue (Winnipeg, 1979, 31p.)
 Schoenfelder (Headingly, 1952, 7p.)
 Springstein (Springstein, 1985, 15p.)
 Steinbach (Steinbach, 1965, 12p.)
 Steinbach (Steinbach, 1978, 31p.)
 Sterling (Winnipeg, 1979, 139p.)
 Thompson (Thompson, 1965, 13p.)
 Whitewater (Boissevain, 1967, 13p.)
 Whitewater (Boissevain, 1980, 35p.)
 Winkler Bergthaler (Winkler, 1979, 13p.)
 Winkler Bergthaler (Winkler, 1980, 79p.)

Ontario

Faith (Leamington, 1982, 19p.)
 Grace (St. Catharines, 1977)
 Hamilton (Hamilton, 1960, 4p.)
 Niagara (Niagara on the Lake, 1956, 20p.)
 Niagara (Niagara on the Lake, 1957, 15p.)
 Stirling Avenue (Kitchener, 1980, 67p.)
 Toronto (Toronto, 1960, 2p.)
 Vineland (Vineland, 1977, 25p.)
 Waters (Lively, 1976, 57p.)
 Waters (Lively, 1978, 24p.)

Memories of the Glidden-Kindersley Mennonite Church

by H.H. Wiebe, Kindersley, Saskatchewan

Editorial Note: In several recent letters, H.H. Wiebe of Kindersley provided the following



H.J. and Margaret (Dyck) Wiebe. Rev. Wiebe was instrumental in the founding and subsequent leadership of the Glidden-Kindersley Mennonite Church. (Courtesy Gerhard I. Peters, Clearbrook, British Columbia)

information about the Glidden-Kindersley Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan. His father, H.J. Wiebe (see photo), wrote an article about this congregation entitled "Geschichte der Glidden-Kindersley Gruppe der Ebenfelder Gemeinder" in the August 26th, 1953 issue of *Der Bote*.

The group was a bit scattered, although that didn't matter much after the auto came in use. My father, H.J. Wiebe, was the first minister.

Member-wise it went downhill, due to many families moving away, especially in the thirties. Right from the start we joined the Ebenfeld Mennonite Church at Herschel with Rev. J. Wiens as our Elder. The group at Superb and Fiske did likewise.

We had many blessed times together whenever a joint day of service was called for. Rev. C.J. Fast led us when my father retired; father died in February 1975.

As one who grew up with the church from a small boy to manhood, many fond memories remain. The church was on our land, beside our yard. As father was the leading minister, we were seldom without dinner guests, or even overnight guests if the speaker came from other points. To me these speakers left a lasting impression. They were Conference officials, Bible School teachers, College staff members, missionaries and many others. I remember Rev. J. Rempel (Rosthern), Elder J.J. Thiessen (Saskatoon), Rev. J.J. Nickel (Aberdeen) very vividly. Also the blind evangelist J.J. Esau (USA) comes to my mind.

Then the many school choirs brought a breath of music to our small group. That is why most of us who grew up at that time went to our Conference schools later on.

The group closed in the early 1970s due to a small membership and when there were no prospects of growth in the country.

The descendants of the Waldes who were part of the church have joined the Alliance Church here and we have been attending the Kindersley Brethren in Christ Church, although we have kept our membership in Herschel.

Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

by John Friesen, Vice-President, MHSC

Alberta: Plans are underway toward forming a separate Alberta Mennonite Historical Society. Henry Goerzen of Carstairs, Alberta has indicated to the President of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Ted Friesen, Altona, Manitoba that beginning in the spring of 1986, he will be willing to work at the formation of an Alberta society.

For a number of years it has been apparent that the Alberta-Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society is geographically too large and the membership too scattered. During the past year, Ted Friesen wrote a number of people in Alberta asking them whether they would wish to work to establish an Alberta society. Henry Goerzen responded to this request.

People in Alberta who are interested in helping to establish a Mennonite Historical Society are encouraged to get in contact with Henry Goerzen, Carstairs, Alberta, T0M 0N0.

British Columbia: The Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia has announced a new service. Starting in spring 1985, the Society is purchasing and stocking English and German books with Mennonite historical content and making the books available to its membership for purchase. The Society is able to offer this service because of a one thousand dollar grant. Income from the sale of the books will go toward the support of the Society.

In order to establish the service, the Society is requesting that publishers and private individuals who have books for sale or who are planning to publish books of Mennonite content, submit this information to it. People interested in purchasing books are invited to contact the Society. The Society's business address is:

Herman Janzen
2180 Holly Street
Clearbrook, B.C.
V2T 2P1

Membership: In May 1985, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference joined the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. This brings to three the number of conferences that are members. The other two conferences are the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. In addition to these three, the membership of MHSC consists of MCC Canada and the four regional Mennonite Historical Societies. The major project of the MHSC is the multi-volume *Mennonites in Canada*. At present work is progressing on volume three.

CMBC Mennonite Studies Research Projects 1985

The following student papers, mostly based on primary sources, have recently been received by the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives and are available to researchers.

Biographies and Family Histories

Edith Ens	The Life of Helen Peters Tiessen.
John Esau	The Esau Family History
Irene Friesen	Elizabeth Peters: She Chose to be a Person First.
Ted Paetkau	Johann Wiebe to Margaret Paetkau.
Janet Tiessen	The Life of Heinrich Wieler.
Gordon Wiebe	Jake Epp: A Profile on a Politician with a Mennonite Background.
Kathy Wiens	David Toews.

Conference Histories

Gerhard Bergen	Vereinigung Deutscher Mennonitengemeinden - its formation and developments till World War I.
Lori Harder	Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba.
Esther Kampen	The Holdeman People in Manitoba.
Jean Lehn	A Statistical Analysis of the Role of Women in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada from 1957 to 1984.

Congregational Histories

Myrna Bergen	The History of the Crystal City Mennonite Church.
Bill Braun	The Carman Mennonite Church 1945-1985.
Shelley Bueckert	The History of Wildwood Mennonite Church 1980-1985.
Darrell Bueckert	The History of Wildwood Mennonite Church. The College Park Years 1975-1980.
Margot Deininger	The Historical Development of the Springstein Mennonite Church.
Deborah Douglas	Mennonite Missions in Vermont.
E.J. Friesen	Church Beginnings in a New Land Arnaud-Ste. Elizabeth 1925-1944.
Mary A. Funk	A History of the Grain of Wheat Church-Community in Winnipeg 1981-1985.
Val Klassen	The Early History of the Mount Royal Mennonite Church.

Michael Neufeld	North Battleford Mennonite Church "Mission and Outreach".
Hanna Rempel	Northdale Mennonite Church Congregational Self-Evaluation March, 1985.
Brenda Tiessen	The History of the Crystal City Mennonite Church.

Institutions and Organizations

John Braun	Elim Bible School 1929-1963
Kathryn Froese	Canadian Foodgrains Bank.
Ed Goerzen	The History of Mennonite Education and Menno Simons School.
Frieda Martens	Lister West S.D.
Nancy Martin	The Purpose and Function of the Old Order Mennonite School System.
Rudy Niebuhr	A History of Mediation Services. A Program sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (Manitoba).
Brenda Sawatzky	A History of Camp Assiniboia.
Debbie Schiedel	A History of Grosvenor Place.
Henry Tessman	Echo-Verlag.

Miscellaneous

Wade Froese	Voting Patterns among Sask. Mennonites.
Ferdinand Funk	Mennonite Influence in Paraguay.
Randy Harder	The Pursuit of the Millennium among the Russian Mennonites (The Claas Epp Story).
Randy Janzen	Mennonite Voting Patterns. A Summarization and Evaluation of Mennonite Voting Patterns in Provincial Elections 1949-1981.
Hans Sawatzky	The Indo-China Conflict According to the <i>Canadian Mennonite</i> .
Bob Schellenberg	Rudy Wiebe: His Life and Work Responses to: <i>Peace Shall Destroy Many, The Temptations of a Big Bear, My Lovely Enemy</i> .
Frieda Wiebe	Why Mennonites leave to attend non-Mennonite Churches.



In the living room at the home of Abraham Lepp, Schoenwiese, Alexandrovsk, Russia, in 1912. Mrs. Abraham Lepp, seated in centre, was the mother-in-law of Mrs. Olga Lepp. (Courtesy Robert Kreider, North Newton, Kansas)

The Norah Lambert Photo Collection

by Beverly Suderman, MHC Staff

The photos arrived by mail on a wintry January day — pictures of large mansions with beautifully sculptured and manicured gardens, well-dressed children on ponies or posed on children's furniture with expensive-looking toys, huge factories and mills, family portraits in elegant parlours, all taken in 1912 when Norah Lambert, an American missionary in Turkey, made a visit to Russia. And whom was she visiting? The local landowners? The gentry? The wealthy businessmen? Yes, all of whom were also Mennonite and who had contributed generously to Lambert's work with Armenian orphans in Turkey.

The year of Miss Lambert's visit, 1912, was the crest of the Mennonite story before the war and Miss Lambert obtained some 22 photographs of the wealthiest and most prosperous Mennonites of Alexandrovsk. Could we identify the people, places or buildings in the pictures? Or did we know of someone in Winnipeg who might be able to identify them? So wrote Robert Kreider of Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, whose mother-in-law happens to be Norah Lambert.

Most of the photos had a bit of identifying information on their backs, but it was

not always specific nor clear. What followed then was a lesson in Mennonite history, genealogy, family ties, immigration and life in Russia for the Mennonites during the early part of this century. Our first destination was Gerhard Lohrenz, and although he had never lived in that particular area of Russia, he was a gold-mine of information about the photographs in general: a building surrounded by a high fence prompted the remark that the Russians always liked to have high walls around their properties; a photograph of an irrigation system provided the opportunity for a lesson in Russian farming methods, and so on. And in the end, Mr. Lohrenz recommended that we take the collection to Mrs. Olga Lepp; she had grown up in the village of Alexandrovsk and might be familiar with the actual places and people depicted in the pictures. Off we went to Mrs. Lepp who also invited two other acquaintances and together they worked at the pictures.

Out came the magnifying glasses to assist the dimming eyes and then came a startling revelation: these people were relatives of Mrs. Lepp's; indeed, they were her in-laws! Identification of the "people pictures" and of the homes and gardens became a time of reliving experiences and of "meeting" old

friends and relatives, of debating whether the young boy posing beside a tree was Johann or Heinz or ? of telling stories about the rich businessmen of the day, and of enjoying the memories of the good times past. Later, while the coffee and cakes were served, Mrs. Lepp remarked that these stories do not get told often enough, that the younger people of today are simply not interested in what their ancestors experienced either then in Russia or today in Canada. Although our work here at the Heritage Centre would indicate otherwise, that people of all ages are indeed spending time researching their past and their families, perhaps we are neglecting the human resources of people such as Mrs. Lepp and her friends. An afternoon with her or any of her contemporaries could teach us all many things not only about life in Russia before the Revolution but also about living here and now.

Editorial Note: Mennonite Heritage Centre has a copy of Norah Lambert's diary of her trip to Russia in 1912 and a list of contributions made by the various Mennonite settlements to her mission in Turkey. Original photos are in possession of Robert Kreider, North Newton, Kansas.

A Visit to Wymysle: A Former Mennonite Village in Poland, November 24, 1984

by Peter Rempel, Research and Administrative Assistant for MCC Europe

On a very windy Saturday morning in November, Sam Myovich, MCC worker in Poland and I, met Wojciech Marchlewski and drove out to the site of the former Mennonite village of Wymysle, about 80 kilometers from Warsaw. Wojciech is an ethnographer who has conducted a special

study of the Mennonite settlements in Poland. He has prepared a very detailed study of the settlement with sketches, maps, photographs and charts. Subsequently he has discovered a list of the village's inhabitants from the mid-19th century and he is in the process of recording genealogical information on each household. By now he knows the Mennonite settlement very well - right down to which house belonged to which family. He began his study of the settlement as a dissertation in ethnography and has continued his research in conjunction with his job in the government's department for the preservation of historical landmarks.

On the way to Wymysle, we pass the former Mennonite settlement at Kazun. We

stop briefly at the former church building now used as a family residence.

To reach Wymysle we have to take a longer detour on rough sand roads — strong winds have toppled numerous trees and the main road is blocked. Wymysle lies off the main road and the remaining houses are stretched out along a narrow sand road at the top of a ridge. The first house at the east end of the village retains some of its majesty — but only because of its size. (See photo.) The mother of the family now living in the house is not interested in visitors. A glimpse into the doorway shows signs of a poor standard of living.

Further along the road we come to the cemetery — a devastated plot with broken down walls and ruined graves. The howling wind and the bare ragged trees set a strangely appropriate mood among the remnants of a deceased Mennonite community. Some gravestones yield names like Schroeder and Peters, and one states poignantly: "DIE TODES STUNDE SCHLUG ZU FRIE DOCH GOTT DER HERR BESTIMMTE SIE"

The next point of interest is the building of the former Mennonite church built in 1864. It stands close to the road and seems to be quite sturdy. Inside are signs that it was once used as a shop or a community club, but now it seem abandoned. Above the front entrance, now barricaded shut, the outlines of the letters of "Mennoniten Kirche" can be discerned. The original letters have been scraped away. (See photo.) A bit further along the road we pass the building which Wojciech identifies as the former school.

Finally we come to the last building standing at the west end of the village. Across the street we chat briefly with a friendly neighbour who knows Wojciech from previous visits.

His house and yard seem to be very orderly and well constructed in contrast to several other yards. Some of the new owners have received government grants to maintain the buildings in their previous form but not all seem to have commitment to preserving the structural or even historical qualities of their buildings.

The lone elderly woman living in part of the older building allows us to enter. Inside Wojciech points out a dividing wall which is painted with a bright light blue and a floral pattern. Who might have decorated their home in this way? Otherwise the interior of the building is drab and cluttered.

Such a visit evokes a mixture of feelings. Surely the inclement weather on the day of our visit shaped the feelings. On the one hand there is sorrow about the ruination of a once-flourishing community of Mennonites. On the other hand there is the conviction that we are called to be reconciling agents, even toward those we might fear or blame, if we want to witness against a more ominous hostility which threatens even greater destruction.



The building of the former Mennonite congregation, Wymysle, Poland. (Courtesy Peter Rempel.)



A house once inhabited by a Mennonite family in the village of Wymysle. (Courtesy Peter Rempel)

Diary . . . Jottings from the Archives

by Dennis Stoesz, MHC Staff

Congregations: The Emmaus Mennonite Church, Wymark, Saskatchewan has begun planning for its 60th anniversary. They were officially organized in 1928 at Blumenhof.

Burrows Bethel Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, is planning its 25th anniversary in 1986. A committee has been organized to work on the preparations for these celebrations. Members of the Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, first began meeting in 1960 to discuss organizing a daughter congregation which was to become Burrows Bethel. In 1961, the group formally organized with 51 charter members and started meeting on Talbot Avenue.

Some early records dating from 1945 to 1960 of the Carman Mennonite Church were recently microfilmed here at the Archives. Bill Braun, a student at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College who was working on a history of the Carman church, his home congregation, contacted the former secretaries and collected these early minutes.

John Friesen, professor of church history at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, has been researching the dates of origin of all the congregations in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. He is including "First Meeting Year," "Founding Date," and "Year of Joining Canadian Conference." This information will be available at the annual conference sessions in Regina this summer.

It will be interesting to see the banners made by each congregation with names and founding dates at the Regina sessions. Often the name of a church has changed through the years. The founding date of a church is also not easy to establish.

Still on founding dates, D.G. Friesen of Altona, Manitoba, asked us about the founding date of the Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church. Though the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba was formed in 1893, church services were held in the village of Altona as early as 1885.

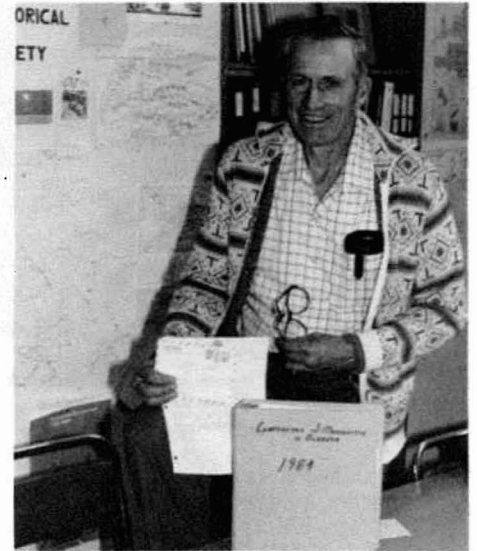
Family Reunions: A family reunion of the descendants of Gerhard (1852-1932) and Anna (Regehr; 1858-1938) Schellenberg is to be held in Kleeefeld, Manitoba on June 17. The contact person for this reunion, Frank Fast, recently dropped in to talk with Arnold Fast, a CMBC student, who has done some research on the Fast line.

A Bartel reunion is being held this summer, as is an Engbrecht reunion which George Engbrecht of Boissevain, Manitoba is coordinating.

Contact Elma Dyck of 48 Coral Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2J 1V7 if you are a descendent of David R. and Susanna (Rempel) Penner and interested in the Penner gathering being planned for June 30, 1985 at the Winkler (Manitoba) Bible Camp.

MHC Staff News: Beverly Suderman, Archives Assistant here at the Heritage Centre, attended a workshop on paper conservation and repair. Archivists, board members and volunteers from museums and archives across Manitoba were there to learn the basics of cleaning, repairing and protecting fragile paper documents. A workshop on the preparation and display of exhibits, sponsored by the Association of Manitoba Archivists, was attended by both Dennis and Bev.

Anne Harms of Winnipeg has begun volunteering one day a week here at the Centre. Her first projects included inter-filing newly typed cards for the Mennonite Historical Library and re-filing Vertical File material. An on-going project will be sorting and filing the congregational bulletins, newsletters and related materials which are sent to the Centre by congregations of the Conference of Mennonites of Canada. Several other people have also indicated an interest in volunteering at the Archives.



Henry Goerzen who recently visited the archives.

Records of the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta

by Henry D. Goerzen, Carstairs, Alberta, Chairperson, Conference of Mennonites in Alberta.

Over the years most of the materials of the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta were lodged with the individuals who served as chairman or secretary. As the years progressed, some records were passed on while others were retained by those who had been involved. Committees were set up so as to assure continuity; records, at least the active section of the files, were passed on.

In 1976, a Conference office was established with enough room for a part-time treasurer and the old files. In 1982 the amount of office space available to us was decreased and as a result, our inactive files had to be moved. These were then stored in our basement where they collected dust under the tennis table between vacuumings. There was concern about fire and water damage. Negotiations began in 1983 with Mennonite Central Committee (Alberta) for space in its new building on 76 Skyline Crescent, which would be both accessible and fire safe. Bill Thiessen, MCC (Alberta) Director and I both felt that storage of files in private homes was less than ideal. Later I decided that we create an archives for all the files, and sort through the materials. It would be a large undertaking. In working through the records, we found four major sections: 1) Conference of Mennonites in Alberta; 2) Alberta Mennonite Youth Organization; 3) Alberta Women in Mission; 4) Menno Bible Institute. The materials were scattered in many files and often very incomplete — some in notebooks, others on onion skin

paper and still others on note paper.

During the winter of 1984, Katie Harder, Secretary of the provincial Conference and also of Carstairs, and I began sorting and filing on top of the tennis table; it was strenuous and tedious work — checking and rechecking and checking again. In my personal day book I wrote: "During this week I primarily focus on the mass of Conf. of Menn. material and begin to sort them for permanent filing . . . The great problem was when we got to interesting stuff — not only to find where it belongs in the files but the content is so interesting in itself . . . I meet a host of friends along the way . . . Dec. 14. Pack the car early; . . . in fire-proof area of office . . . establish rules for access to and use of files."

This does not conclude the work. There are still some Menno Bible Institute files and materials, pre-1952 Conference material, as well as more Alberta Mennonite Youth Organization and Alberta Women in Mission files to be sorted. Some of the earlier papers are becoming very fragile and require special attention.

At our April 1985 General Council meeting, I brought the matter of materials and files to the attention of every Committee. The response was positive and we decided we would: 1) pursue more diligently the collection of all outstanding files; 2) think in terms of a provincial archivist — both of persons and duties; 3) come to the November meeting with a clearer proposal and report.



The Stoeszes and the Harms examining their efforts; (l-r) William Harms, Henry Stoesz, Trudy (Stoesz) Harms, Sarah Stoesz.

The David Stoesz Diary of 1872-1896: From German to English

by Dennis Stoesz, MHC Staff

Henry and Sarah Stoesz of Altona, Manitoba were honoured at a special supper gathering at an Altona restaurant on April 25, 1985. The occasion was the completion of the translation from German to English of the 200-page David Stoesz Diary, 1872-1896. Some months earlier, William and Trudy Harms, also of Altona, had completed transliterating the diary from handwritten Gothic script to the English (Latin) letters. Mrs. Harms then arranged for her brother, Henry Stoesz, to translate it into English.

William Harms opened the supper meeting by reading Deuteronomy 6:3-9 and 8:6-9: "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." (6:6-7, RSV) Reverend David F. Friesen from the Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church then led in prayer, thanking God for his rich blessing on us and on our forebears. Rev. Friesen stressed that the faith story of the past must be carried on by our children. The ability to read the Stoesz diary in English is one such step. Dennis Stoesz of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg then presented Mr. and Mrs. Stoesz with a bound version of the translated and transliterated diary.

Much visiting took place throughout the evening. Present at the meal were Henry and Sarah Stoesz of Altona, Trudy (nee Stoesz) and William Harms of Gretna (Edenthal), Reverend David F. and Mary Friesen of Rosenfeld, John and Agatha Remple of Halbstadt, William J. Kehler, Ed and Sara Stoesz, all of Altona, Don Harms and Dennis and Rhoda Stoesz, all of Winnipeg.

David Stoesz is the great-grandfather of Henry Stoesz and Trudy (Stoesz) Harms. He was ordained as a minister of the Bergthaler Church in Russia in 1869 and served as elder of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church in

Manitoba from 1879 to the time of his death in 1903. Stoesz began his diary in January of 1872, two years before he left Russia for Manitoba. The diary describes the plans for emigration, the trip to Manitoba and his 22 years there. November 20, 1896 is the date of the last entry.

Interest in this diary was sparked when a hunt for genealogical information revealed that the name and birthdate of a fourth child to David M. and Agatha Stoesz (son and daughter-in-law of the diarist) was recorded in the diary but not in the Sommerfelder Church Register. Reverend David M. Stoesz was the grandfather of Trudy Harms and Henry Stoesz. Elder Stoesz had written: "A son was born to David M. and Agatha Stoesz and he was buried the next day as he was stillborn." Curiosity about other facts in the diary led the Harms to read other portions which had been transliterated some years ago. This transliteration, however, was not very accurate and reading the presumably "German" words brought them some amusement. William and Trudy Harms then set out to correctly decipher the Gothic script

and to recopy the diary into Latin letters using a computer and a word processing system.

Translation was the next logical step and Henry Stoesz's knowledge of German and farming provided a helpful background for this task. The diary, written by a farmer, was set during the days of horse and buggy, of threshing floors, oxen, herdsmen and 1892 prices of 54 cents to the bushel.

The completed work came to 65 single-spaced pages in German and to 59 pages in English. Copies of the translation have been provided for interested individuals.

While the diary had only a limited readership when it could only be read in the Gothic script and in the German language, it can now be enjoyed by those generations for whom the English language is the norm.

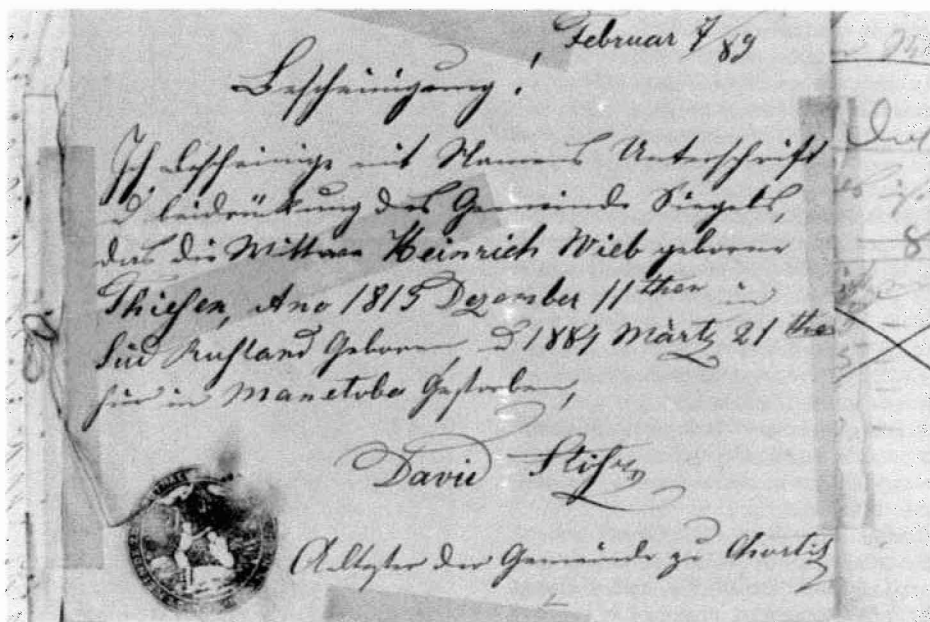
The diary has been at the Mennonite Heritage Centre since 1974, courtesy of William and Trudy (Stoesz) Harms.

DAVID STOESZ DIARY EXCERPT (Translation)

1888 Sat., Oct. 13th I bought a 1 year old stallion from Peter Hiebert for \$55.00. Wed., the 10th, our neighbour Mrs. Harder is company with her mother. Mrs. Ens left for Minnesota.

Sunday the 7th we had guests, a teacher by the name of Heinrich Richert from Kansas, and my wife's cousin Jakob Hoepfner from the West Reserve. They both addressed us in the Church at Chortitz, with Hoepfner making the introduction and Richert giving the lesson on the text.

Tuesday Oct. 16th, all threshing in the village was done when they finished threshing for Jakob Funk. Yesterday, Thurs. the 18th it rained all day; towards evening the rains became mixed with snow.



Excerpts from the diary of Elder David Stoesz (page 194). Note the Gemeinde seal on the bottom left-hand corner.